

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BERN

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INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BERN 0255

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ICRC, PARM, PFOR, VN, VS, MA

SUBJECT: PRG ISSUE AT LAW OF WAR CONFERENCE

1. I SAW GRABER TOGETHER WITH DCM AND POL COUNSELOR EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY (5 P.M. LOCAL) TODAY TO TRY TO GET HIS AGREEMENT TO A TWO-THIRDS RULING AND TO SEEK HIS AGREEMENT TO CHAIR CONFERENCE UNTIL PRG ISSUE PROMPTLY DISPOSED OF.

2. I EXPLAINED OUR ARGUMENTS AND CONCERNS WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY ACUTE IN LIGHT RECENT ESTABLISHMENT PRG LIAISON OFFICE, GENEVA.

3. GRABER SAID HE HAD "DIVINED" MY PURPOSE IN SEEKING FOR AN APPOINTMENT AND SAID THE SWISS UNDERSTAND OUR CONCERNS AND PREOCCUPATIONS. HE RECALLED THAT THE SWISS HAD ELABORATED A CAREFUL DOCTRINE ABOUT WHO ACCDED TO THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS. FORMERLY IT HAD BEEN STATES AND THE QUESTION OF OTHER GROUPS HAD ONLY ARisen IN THE LAST CONFERENCE AT WHICH HE SOUGHT TO BE NEUTRAL, POSITIVE, CONSTRUCTIVE CHAIRMAN. SAID HE STILL HAD UNDER CONSIDERATION POSITION HE WOULD ADOPT AS CHAIRMAN IF ISSUE ARISES WHEN HE IS IN CHAIR. IF HE OPTS FOR RULE 32, HE IS CONFIDENT THAT HE WILL BE OPEN TO SEVERE REPROACHES. A PRIORI THE MATTER, OF COURSE, HAD BEEN SETTLED IN THE PREVIOUS CONFERENCE. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE SWISS WANT TO GET

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THE CONFERENCE INTO MATTERS OF SERIOUS SUBSTANCE AS RAPIDLY

AS POSSIBLE AND HOPE TO AVOID GETTING HUNG UP ON PROCEDURAL MATTERS. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE TIMING OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRG LIAISON OFFICE WAS AN UNFORTUNATE COINCIDENCE, BUT THE SWISS HAD LONG SINCE DECIDED, AS A MATTER OF POLICY, TO PROVIDE FACILITIES TO THE U.N. IF THE U.N. REQUESTED THAT AN ORGANIZATION BE ACCREDITED TO IT.

4. WHEN I PRESSED GRABER TO STAY IN THE CHAIR UNTIL THE ISSUE WAS SETTLED, HE MADE NO COMMITMENT OTHER THAN EXPRESSING THE HOPE THAT PROCEDURAL MATTERS COULD BE DEALT WITH RAPIDLY IN THE OPENING PLENARY AND THAT THE SUBSTANTIVE COMMISSIONS COULD GET TO WORK.

COMMENT: PICTET WAS PRESENT THROUGHOUT MY CONVERSATION WITH GRABER AND WE WILL FOLLOW UP FURTHER WITH HIM NEXT WEEK. IT OUR IMPRESSION NO DECISION ON HOW HE WOULD RULE AS CHAIRMAN HAS YET BEEN REACHED, BUT IT SEEMS IMPROBABLE TO US THAT WE WILL GET ANY COMMITMENT OUT OF PRESIDENT GRABER BEFORE THE CONFERENCE CONVENES.
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